

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A process for the fractional condensation of a hot gas mixture ~~which as well as acrylic acid contains~~ comprising acrylic acid and at least one further condensable component in a column in the presence of at least one stabilizer, which comprises metering in at least a portion of the at least one stabilizer as a melt.

Claim 2 (Original): A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the melt of at least one stabilizer having a melting point below 120°C is used as a solvent for at least one stabilizer having a melting point above 120°C.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): ~~Melt~~ A melt comprising

- a) at least one phenolic compound,
- b) phenothiazine and
- c) optionally at least one ~~further~~ compound which is effective as a stabilizer.

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): ~~Melts~~ The melt as claimed in claim 3, wherein a) is selected from the group consisting of p-aminophenol, p-nitrosophenol, 2-*tert*-butylphenol, 4-*tert*-butylphenol, 2,4-di-*tert*-butylphenol, 2-methyl-4-*tert*-butylphenol, 4-*tert*-butyl-2,6-dimethylphenol, hydroquinone and hydroquinone monomethyl ether.

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): ~~Melts~~ The melt as claimed in claim 3 which ~~have~~ comprises the following composition:

- a): 60 – 99% by weight,
- b): 1 – 20% by weight and

c): 0 – 20% by weight,

~~where~~ wherein the sum thereof is always equal to 100% by weight.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): A process as claimed in claim 1, ~~any of claims 1–2~~, ~~wherein a~~ wherein said metering comprises introducing the melt comprising a) at least one phenolic compound, b) phenothiazine and c) optionally at least one compound which is effective as a stabilizer ~~as claimed in any of claims 3 to 5 is introduced~~ into the upper column region and introducing phenothiazine into the remaining column region.

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): A process as claimed in claim 1, ~~any of claims 1–2 or 6~~, wherein the hot gas mixture is cooled in an apparatus isolated from the column.

Claim 8 (Currently Amended): A process as claimed in claim 1, ~~any of claims 1–2 or 6–7~~, wherein at least one discharged stream is subjected to a thermal and/or catalytic treatment.

Claim 9 (Currently Amended): A process as claimed in claim 1 ~~any of claims 1–2 or 6–8~~ which is carried out in the presence of molecular oxygen.

Claim 10 (Currently Amended): A method of stabilizing ethylenically unsaturated compounds in processes for preparing the ethylenically unsaturated compounds which comprises
incorporating the melt as claimed in claim 3 into a medium comprising the ethylenically unsaturated compound. ~~The use of melts as claimed in any of claims 3 to 5 for~~

~~stabilizing ethylenically unsaturated compounds in processes for preparing them.~~

Claim 11 (Original): A process for rectificatively separating substance mixtures comprising at least one polymerizable compound in the presence of a stabilizer composition comprising at least one phenolic stabilizer, which comprises metering the stabilizer composition into the rectification unit as a melt.